

## **CLAIMS:**

1. A theft prevention method of a personal watercraft equipped with a main switch for opening/closing a main power-supply circuit including a starting circuit of an engine, the method comprising:

detecting the main switch being in an ON-state;

detecting that an operative coupling exists between an operating device configured to enable activation of the main switch and an operating device receptor;

detecting that the engine is stopped; and

inhibiting the engine from starting, provided that the main switch is detected to be in the ON-state, no connection is detected to exist between the operating device and the main switch, and the engine is detected to be stopped.

2. The theft prevention method of claim 1, wherein the main switch is a key-operable main switch, the operating device receptor is a key-receiving portion of the key-operable main switch, and the operating device is a key.

3. The theft prevention method of claim 1, wherein the operating device is an IC transmitter and the operating device receptor is an IC receiver.

4. A theft prevention apparatus of a personal watercraft equipped with a main switch for opening/closing a main power-supply circuit including a starting circuit of an engine, comprising:

a main switch ON-state detector configured to detect that the main switch is in an ON-state;

an operating device configured to enable the main switch to be actuated;

an operating device detector configured to detect that the operating device is operatively coupled to an operating device receptor of the watercraft;

an engine stop detector configured to detect a stopping of the engine; and

an engine start inhibitor configured to inhibit the engine from starting, provided that the main switch is detected in the ON-state by the main switch ON-state detector, the operating device and the operating device receptor are not detected to be operative coupled by the operating device detector, and a stopping of the engine is detected by the engine stop detector.

5. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the engine start inhibitor is configured so as to inhibit at least one of the starting circuits of the engine, an ignition circuit of the engine, and a fuel injection circuit of the engine from closing the circuit(s).

6. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the main switch is a key-operable main switch, the operating device receptor is a key-receiving portion of the key-operable main switch, and the operating device is a key for mechanically opening/closing the main power-supply circuit via the main switch.

7. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the starting circuit of the engine is provided with the main switch, a kill switch with/without a tether cord for opening the main power-supply circuit, and a starter switch for closing the starting circuit of the engine.

8. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 7, wherein the engine stop detector is configured so as to detect at least one of a removal operation of the tether cord from the kill switch, an OFF-operation of the kill switch, and a zero engine speed.

9. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the engine start inhibitor includes a timer which starts a time count when the main switch ON-state detector detects the main switch being in the ON-state, the operating device detector detects no existence of the connection between the operating device and the main switch, and the engine stop detector detects the stopping of the engine, and wherein engine start inhibitor is configured so as to inhibit starting of the engine after the time count of the timer reaches a predetermined time interval.

10. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 6, further comprising an alert indicator for alerting an operator of the personal watercraft when the main switch ON-state detector detects the main switch being in the ON-state, the operating device detector detects that no connection exists between the operating device and the main switch, and the engine stop detector detects the stop of the engine.

11. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 6, wherein the engine start inhibitor cancels a state in which at least the engine is inhibited from starting, by turning the main switch back into the ON-state after turning the main switch into the OFF-state.

12. The theft prevention apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the operating device is an IC transmitter configured to store information related to an operator of the personal watercraft and capable of performing a radio-transmission of the information, and the operating device receptor is an IC receiver that is attached to a body of the personal watercraft and is configured to perform a radio-reception of the information transmitted from the IC transmitter, and

wherein the main switch ON-state detector, operating device detector, engine stop detector, and engine start inhibitor are at least partially included within an electronic control unit that is connected with the IC receiver through a signal line, and that is also configured to give an instruction to the main switch to open/close the main power-supply circuit; and

wherein the engine start inhibitor is configured to inhibit the engine from starting provided that the main switch is in the ON-state as detected by the main switch ON-state detector, no connection is detected to exist between the operating device and the main switch by the operating device detector, and a stopping of the engine is detected by the engine stop detector.